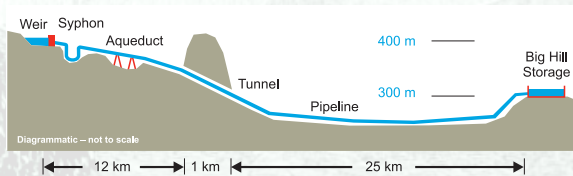


# Fyans Creek to Big Hill – Stawell Water Supply, 1881



## Look – All That Pipe and No Pumps

Stawell's water supply was a significant engineering achievement. By tunnelling through the Grampians, John D'Alton could supply up to 10 million gallons (38 megalitres) of water a day without pumps – gravity did all the work which significantly reduced operating costs.



## John D'Alton (1829-1904)

The scheme was designed by Stawell Borough Engineer, John D'Alton, and work started in 1875.

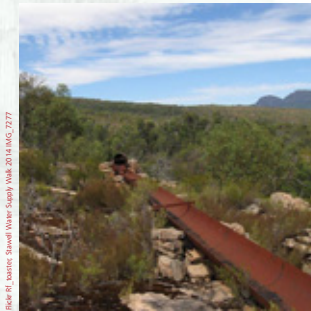
Water was first supplied in 1878 and the scheme was completed in 1881. Stawell's water supply still comes from Fyans Creek and uses most of the original system.

D'Alton came to Australia from Ireland in 1861. He also designed the Town Hall in Stawell.

The reserve at Big Hill and a fountain on Main Street are named after him.



A section of the original wooden flume known as the Zig Zag



A section of old steel flume leading to an inverted syphon

## The Wild Water Ride

A 12 kilometre wooden flume was built from a small weir on Fyans Creek to the tunnel. Later this was replaced with steel fluming on stone pillars to resist bushfires.

The water had a wild ride through the rugged bush, down the Zig Zag Flume and around the Barbican Curve. To cross gullies, several inverted syphons and aqueducts on timber trestles were built.

The flume was replaced with an underground pipeline in 1955.

Background: The 141 metre long Bovine Creek Aqueduct was replaced with a syphon in 1915

## Blasting the Tunnel

Key to the scheme was the tunnel through the Grampians. Work started from both ends and the sections met with great precision.

And for the first time in Victoria, dynamite was used instead of black powder (gunpowder). This made the job safer and was more effective. D'Alton also used a new type of rock drill, invented by Robert Ford of Castlemaine, which was powered by compressed air.

With various delays, it took five years to complete but the tunnel is still in service.



Work commenced on the west face of the tunnel on 18 February 1875



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